
Office of Head Start

State and National Collaboration Offices
Child Care Report
2008



Alabama

Support an increase in availability and accessibility of quality child care services for low-income children through coordination and partnerships.

The Governor's Council on Pre-K was established in September 2007 to advise the Governor and the Director of School Readiness on issues surrounding the expansion and direction of pre-kindergarten. The objectives of the Council were to:

- ◆ develop a plan to expand the number of pre-kindergarten classrooms and enhance the quality of existing classrooms;
- ◆ avoid displacement of existing program funding by new state dollars;
- ◆ provide intensive technical assistance and increase accountability; and
- ◆ expand the pool of qualified pre-kindergarten teachers to meet the growing demand.

The program was awarded \$10 million, a more than 103 percent increase as a result of the Alliance for School Readiness advocacy efforts to frame pre-kindergarten for funding and support. The program, *First Class: Alabama's Voluntary Pre-K Initiative*, was awarded a 10 for implementing all National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) benchmarks. These efforts reflect positively for the entire early care community, as the program design includes a multi-program participation and inclusive vision.

There are Head Start teachers enrolled in the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) scholarship program jointly funded by the Office of School Readiness and Department of Human Resources, Child Care Division. The Alabama Partnership for Children manages the program and encourages participation across the early care community. Scholarships are available through a competitive process to Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and child care staff for pursuing bachelor's degrees. The program provides 10% of tuition and books; the sponsoring agency provides release time, 5% pay raise or \$300 bonus upon successful completion.

Twenty-five Head Start programs (85% participation rate) received competitive pre-kindergarten grants. All grantees had opportunities to attend local training provided by the Office of School Readiness on process and content. The goal is 100% participation by Head Start grantees.

The Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grantee meeting, Building Comprehensive Systems and Strengthening Families through Partnerships with a Focus on Family Support and Early Childhood Mental Health, was held in Baltimore, Maryland, March 12-14, 2008. The Alabama team consisted of Child Care, Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Public Health, and the HSSCO. State plans were developed in mental health, child abuse and neglect, successes, and barriers. The results-based accountability approach will be used to help Alabama evaluate accomplishments and future plans. Dr. Robert Beshear, a Montgomery pediatrician, received the 2008 Ray E. Helfer, M.D., Award from the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Fund during the meeting.

The Blueprint for Zero to Five, Early Childhood Systems Initiative developed its 2008–09 priorities and indicators. The HSSCO served on the advisory committee and compiled the following data based on the KIDS COUNT 2007 Data Book/State Agency Data/Program Information Report (PIR), which reflect the most current information for 2004–05. The data will serve as a baseline for evaluating future success:

Ready Families in Ready Communities

- ◆ births to teens and single mothers (61% of births to teens and 13.1% of births to unmarried women)
- ◆ child abuse and neglect—14.3% rate of substantiated cases

Ready Services—Health: access to health insurance and a medical home

- ◆ 7% of children under 6 without insurance
- ◆ 17,143 children received health care from a consistent provider

Ready Services—Early Care and Education: access to dependable, high-quality care

- ◆ 226 subsidized child care facilities
- ◆ 26,900 children served in subsidized child care

Ready Schools—transition to kindergarten

- ◆ 120 of 132 school district transition teams (91% of school districts) participated in community transition teams consisting of child care, Head Start, and kindergarten teachers
- ◆ 7.4% first-grade retention rate

Head Start programs statewide and the HSSCO participated in Step Up For Kids Day (9/16/08) as a part of the Every Child Matters Birth to Five National Initiative. Early childhood providers, parents, children, and supporters assembled on the Capitol steps to educate the public on the needs of children. The presenter was the State's Supreme Court Justice. The event was successful and provided much-needed positive press coverage.

The State pre-kindergarten allocation for FY 2008–09 was \$20 million for:

- ◆ 43 public schools
- ◆ 25 Head Start grantees
- ◆ 3 faith-based organizations
- ◆ 26 child care providers

The East Coast Migrant Head Start Project has three sites, two in south Alabama and one in west Alabama, serving approximately 200 children. The program signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Office of School Readiness that addressed all areas of compliance in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 with guidance from the HSSCO.

Alaska

In Alaska almost everything done concerning ECE involves child care, Child Care Licensing, ECCS, and Infant Learning Programs from HSS; the HSSCO; the State Head Start grant program; the 619 special education program; and other topic specific staff in EED, the University of Alaska system, the Child Care Resource & Referral Network, Head Start grantees, the Federally contracted Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) System for Alaska's Head Start, the System for Early Education Development (SEED), the Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children, and representatives of Best Beginnings.

In 2008, the HSSCO saw the continued implementation efforts of Best Beginnings. The HSSCO implemented a low-level guidance council and began the development of a system that could work with the Early Learning and the ECCS Leadership Councils to integrate existing ECE efforts and eventually build into a state early childhood governance structure. To that end the State implemented the reformation of the Interdepartmental Early Childhood Coordinating Council (IECCC) to determine how the state entities would function with their private partners and how to elevate ECE policy issues.

As for specific work with the Child Care Office in HHS, the HSSCO continued or began the following activities:

- ◆ continued inclusion of the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in the development, dissemination and implementation of Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines. The HSSCO, EED, and the Child Care Offices provided the leadership and funding for this project in collaboration with Part B 619 and Part C Special Education. The first training of trainers took place in 2007 with two other trainings completed in 2008;
- ◆ regular and frequent meetings between the Child Care Administrator and the HSSCO saw early development of joint multisystem regulations and oversight;
- ◆ inclusion of child care programs in collaborative models for the Alaska Community Preschool Project and the planning for the Alaska Pilot Pre-Kindergarten Project (AP3) along with school districts, the AHSA, the University, parents, Native Entities, ECCS, and Best Beginnings; and
- ◆ joint participation on the SEED Council, the Alaska SF team, the ECCS grant team, Best Beginnings, and all levels of the new leadership council.

American Indian/Alaska Native

The AIAN-CD:

- ◆ met in New York City with Region II child care staff and representatives from Seneca Nation Department of Education, Head Start, and child care for a Tribal Roundtable discussion on collaboration practices. Following a good exchange of information, a proposed follow-up meeting for all East Coast Tribes that have both Head Start and Child Care programs is tentatively scheduled to be held at Seneca;
- ◆ prepared materials for inclusion in the AIAN-TAN Collaboration topical conference call scheduled for March 19, 2008. Materials include PowerPoint slides; Collaboration Forum "Suggestions for Successful Collaborations;" Head Start Act (as amended), Sec. 642 "Collaboration and Coordination;" 45 CFR

1304.41(a)(2) Partnerships; AIAN-TAN Tip Sheet: “Collaboration with Child Care & Pre-K;” and the AIAN-TAN Tip Sheet: “Fiscal Challenges of Collaboration;”

- ◆ sponsored a teleconference on “AIAN Collaboration with Child Care and Pre-K, and How to Build Community Partnerships.” The AIAN-CD’s presentation included an overview of collaboration, per the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, the new reauthorization language pertaining to collaboration, Program Information Report (PIR) trends for Region XI, and promising practices of collaboration as expressed through the stories of Head Start directors from Alaska, Arizona, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Oklahoma;
- ◆ compiled notes of the Collaboration conference call to document what AIAN Head Start directors had to share regarding their collaborative practices. Draft versions of the notes were sent to the respective individuals for their additions/corrections/deletions. Portions of their notes may be included in a future Collaboration Resource Manual;
- ◆ completed a revision of the “Partnerships and Collaboration” section of the New Director’s Handbook with the singular collaboration focus on child care expanded somewhat and language included from the Head Start Act to emphasize new requirements for grantees. Finally, the AIAN-CD made specific mention of AIAN and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs within the auspices of the Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO);
- ◆ planned with the director of the Tribal Child Care Technical Assistance Center (TriTAC), a Technical Advisory Committee representing three California associations, for a joint meeting between Head Start and child care, tentatively scheduled for either during first week in December (3–5) or in January (12–14). It was agreed that first item of business would be to have participants gain a greater understanding of each other’s programs (e.g., how they operate; constraints and philosophies). A search is underway for individuals who have both Head Start and child care experience to assist with the conference;
- ◆ requested that AIAN-TAN local specialists share with their grantees that Pre-K Now’s scheduled October call will focus on “opportunities for collaboration to increase pre-k access and quality for Native American children and families.” Topics include complex governance structures and focus on collaboration between state pre-kindergarten, Tribal Governments, and Indian Head Start;
- ◆ worked with the Alaska Head Start Association, at their request, to partner them with an experienced Head Start director who has set up successful pre-kindergarten agreements in school districts. The AIAN-CD shared with that director pertinent collaborative language from the No Child Left Behind legislation that compels LEAs to work constructively with Head Start programs. The AIAN-CD also sent her the “What Works! Head Start Pre-K Partnership Local Model” form for her consideration to participate at the behest of the Office of Head Start Collaboration Office;
- ◆ throughout October to December, requested from AIAN grantees, received, and catalogued MOUs pertaining to pre-kindergarten partnerships as required by Sec.642(e)(1,2,4 and 5) of the Head Start Act; and
- ◆ conducted a foundation grants search for Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association to search for seed money for a pre-kindergarten/child care program. Information on four foundations that might be able to assist was forwarded to the Head Start director.

Arizona

Project: First Things First Quality Improvement and Rating System

Goal: Through their participation in the development of the quality rating and improvement system, Head Start directors and the HSSCO Director are able to provide research and make recommendations for the system that address Head Start issues. There is an increase in quality programs in the State of Arizona and in support to Head Start programs to improve their quality.

Update: The First Things First Board voted in March 2008 to begin phasing in the Quality Improvement and Rating System (Quality First!). Work to develop this system has been underway within the Governor's Office and the HSSCO since 2005. The Quality First! system includes outreach, administration, assessment, coaching, evaluation, and incentives for 300 licensed centers and homes to participate in the first phase of the QIRS. In September, the vendor contracts for the assessment and coaching components of Quality First! were awarded to community-based agencies that are each working with a broad spectrum of community partners to accomplish the tasks. The HSSCO Director served on the evaluation team for these proposals. Head Start programs, as well as all licensed centers, will be able to apply to participate in the Quality First! Phase 1 roll-out beginning in January 2009. First Things First, with Head Start and community involvement, will be developing consensus on the rating standards used to define quality during FY 2009. The ratings component of Quality Improvement and Rating System will be initiated in FY 2011. For more information visit <http://www.azftf.gov/WhatWeDo/Programs/QualityFirst/Pages/default.aspx>.

Arkansas

The HSSCO continued active participation with the Arkansas Children's Week Committee and local programs for the Arkansas Children's Week activities held in April. The HSSCO and AHSA, in cooperation with the Region VI Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Network, sponsored workshops for early childhood providers on the topic of "Teaching & Enhancing Learning through Music & Movement."

The HSSCO Director continued involvement with the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning Initiative and attended the national meeting for state partners held in Baltimore, Maryland, in March.

The AHSA, in cooperation with the HSSCO, set a goal to increase the number of State Quality Approved child care programs. Two-thirds of the Head Start centers in Arkansas are State Quality Approved or have National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation. Work continues in cooperation with the Arkansas TA Specialists to support Head Start programs and centers that want to achieve State Quality Approval, and several have developed plans to move in that direction.

The HSSCO Director is a member of the newly formed evaluation team for the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) looking at tools to evaluate QRIS when it rolls out in Arkansas. The HSSCO participated in QRIS training for representatives who are working with specific early childhood sites prior to implementation of QRIS.

California

MOUs with Publicly Funded Pre-kindergarten. The HSSCO and the Region IX Office signed and disseminated a joint letter to state preschool contractors and Head Start programs regarding this new Head Start State Pre-kindergarten Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) requirement. A sample MOU that programs may use is available on the California Head Start Association (CHSA) Web site. The HSSCO has also been contacted by many Head Start and state contractors for individual technical assistance (TA) regarding the new requirements.

State Preschool Regulations Change. New regulations developed in response to the recommendations of a Head Start-Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) workgroup facilitated by the HSSCO go into effect January 8, 2009. These new regulations are intended to ease barriers to full-day partnerships between California's state preschool programs and Head Start by more closely aligning state preschool with Head Start enrollment priorities. The regulations now specify that state preschool contractors engaged in partnerships with Head Start will be able to search the CEL for children "who meet Head Start enrollment priorities, as these children shall be deemed as meeting the priorities specified." Children referred by Child Protective Services maintain first priority under state statute.

State Early Learning Council and California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee. The HSSCO and the CHSA have been in discussions with early education leaders regarding the role of Head Start in these coordinating bodies. Discussions are taking place regarding the naming of a State Early Learning Council (a Head Start requirement), as well as the composition of the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee, formed this year by state legislation. The HSSCO will work to ensure there is adequate Head Start involvement in both committees.

Statewide Cluster Meetings. The HSSCO, the CHSA, and the Region IX fiscal TA specialist conducted six cluster meetings across California in May 2008. The meetings focused on full-day, full-year partnerships, an update on collaboration activities, and new reauthorization requirements.

Matrix of Financial Considerations for Partnerships. A matrix of fiscal guidance for grantees partnering with the California Department of Education (CDE) Child Development Division (CDD) contractors was finalized and is available on the HSSCO Web site. The matrix was presented and discussed at the statewide cluster meetings.

California State Community Care Licensing Roundtables. The HSSCO, the Region IX Office, the STG Technical Assistance Network (TAN), and the California State Community Care Licensing (CCL) conducted three regional roundtables on CCL-Head Start issues and partnerships across California. The roundtables provided a forum for joint planning and consensus on licensing issues and barriers.

Colorado

The HSSCO Director participated in:

- ◆ *Fingerprint Workgroup* with representatives from Department of Education, DHS Division of Child Care, and Colorado Bureau of Investigation to address how the two departments can share fingerprint information so that teachers do not have to pay twice if they work for licensed child care in a school district;

- ◆ *Licensing Regulation Task Force* with DHS Division of Child Care, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and local Head Start managers to identify and address barriers to compliance with state licensing regulations and propose revised requirements; and
- ◆ *State and Territory Child Care Administrators Meeting* (July 2008)—the professional development track—with an emphasis on Quality Rating Systems.

Connecticut

Goal: All Head Start children needing full-day, full-year child care will have access to a child care option that meets their needs for quality and consistency. Low-income children will be more likely to receive quality child care linked to comprehensive services.

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ collaborated with the State Child Care administrator on small grants to infant/toddler providers for:
 - ◆ infant/toddler training for interdisciplinary teams of consultants;
 - ◆ development of infant/toddler development and learning training modules; and
 - ◆ program improvement supports.

One infant/toddler team from a state-funded child care program was funded to participate in the second pilot of the infant/toddler interdisciplinary consultant training initiative. With the addition of Part C partners in this year's pilot, the training helped to build systems to support inclusive child care and is leading to the creation of a Part C child care guidance document for the State;

- ◆ worked with Region I child care and other New England states on a technical assistance (TA) project with ZERO TO THREE to develop infant/toddler networks, including EHS, in the states. This work ties in with efforts for the Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) that will integrate consultation into state program improvement system designs; and
- ◆ continued a discussion on infant/toddler child care and potential expansion of EHS, particularly as it relates to increased resources for vulnerable children receiving child welfare services. The DCF has become a strong advocate for exploring ways to align infant/toddler child care, EHS, and child abuse and neglect prevention efforts in ways that better support families. Data are being gathered on unmet infant/toddler child care needs.

Delaware

There is no Child Care information available.

Florida

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ resumed monthly Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) conference calls with the Head Start directors and staff to address issues and concerns specific to Head Start programs;
- ◆ attended weekly executive leadership meetings with the State Child Care Administrator and Office of Early Learning staff, furthering communication among the HSSCO, pre-kindergarten, and child care. These meetings resulted in opportunities for shared professional development and identification of common data points between Head Start and the Office of Early Learning. These efforts address the goals of improving child outcomes and quality of child care through highly qualified staff;
- ◆ served on the Zero to Five Early Learning Standards revision committee and the Approaches to Learning subcommittee. The HSSCO Director invited Head Start practitioners to provide feedback on Standards revisions. The revised Standards will include both the VPK 4-year-old Standards and the Zero to Five Standards;
- ◆ collaborated with the Florida Head Start Association (FHSA) on a display booth for Children's Day at the Capitol to highlight Head Start Initiatives and child outcomes information; and
- ◆ presented to the Early Learning Coalition Executive Directors information about the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 and how it will affect Head Start's participation in collaborations with other state child care.

Georgia

Action Step: A state MOU is in process that addresses the ten activities addressed in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The MOU includes Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL); Georgia Head Start Association (GHSA); Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE); ACF Region IV; and DHR. This replaces the MOU previously drafted by the Blended Services Workgroup and is more in line with the Act.

Outcome: The purpose of the MOU is to support Head Start grantees in working effectively with their Local Education Agencies (LEAs). This MOU will set a strong statewide foundation that will support local partnerships and agreements.

Action Step: The HSSCO facilitated a letter of agreement with DECAL. The agreement supports blending Georgia pre-kindergarten and Head Start classrooms and adding Head Start children to Georgia pre-kindergarten. Meetings about the benefits of blending programs were held.

Outcome: All Head Start agencies made a commitment to apply for blended funding. This translates into a request of 3,745 additional slots for Head Start-eligible children. Additional training is being scheduled to provide support for Head Start programs, especially in the area of cost allocation. The HSSCO Director continues to meet with Georgia pre-kindergarten regarding the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*.

The Child Care Resource and Referral System (CCR&R) in Georgia is undergoing revision from 14 areas to seven areas. Georgia Head Start agencies are currently utilizing CCR&Rs for training. All training provided by Georgia CCR&Rs must be qualified (state-approved) through the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System (<http://www.training.decal.state.ga.us>) to meet the annual hourly training requirements for state licensing in Georgia. Head Start family service workers are linked with CCR&Rs in their locality, and CCR&Rs refer families to Georgia Head Start programs.

Hawaii

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ participated in quarterly Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care Advisory Committee meetings and shared an HSSCO report at each meeting. This committee, comprised of early care service providers and staff from the child care licensing program, meets quarterly to receive state updates on program services and initiatives and to provide input in the development of policies and procedures related to child care services;
- ◆ secured reports from the DHS/Office of Information Technology to identify addresses of Head Start/EHS-eligible families to be used by grantees for recruitment purposes. Facilitated coordination between Hawaii PreSort and the Head Start directors for the bulk mailing of applications to eligible families;
- ◆ developed and disseminated a “Head Start Partnerships Report” that described child care and other partnership models that Head Start grantees are currently involved in. This report was created to: inform the HSSCO of what currently exists and what linkages could be strengthened or created; share with community partners, policy makers and funders the extent of relationship-building efforts Head Start engages in and the degree to which collaborations yield successful outcomes; entice Head Start agencies to seek out similar partnerships within their respective communities; and inform the HSAH as to which partnerships it might want to formalize through interagency agreements;
- ◆ developed and disseminated a 2008 Head Start fact sheet highlighting community partnerships, as well as pertinent information gleaned from the 2007-08 Program Information Report (PIR);
- ◆ convened a meeting of Head Start directors and community partners (child care, health, higher education) to share information about Hawaii Head Start, discuss pre-kindergarten/child care/Head Start models on the national level, and begin discussing potential partnerships between service providers and Head Start. Meeting was well-received by attendees and has since promoted follow-up meetings between Head Start staff and community partners around resource sharing and potential initiatives;
- ◆ met with members of the Child Care Business Coalition, a group originally formed by multi-site preschool organizations for support and advocacy efforts, to discuss potential partnership development with Head Start grantees. This initial meeting was seen as an entrée for future planning around collaboration with Head Start; and
- ◆ participated in a meeting with DHS Child Care Specialists and Abbey Cohen, Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist from National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) for Region IX, to discuss updates on the status of Hawaii’s child care budget, cost containment issues for continued funding of projects and services, and how other states are using the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to fund pre-kindergarten activities.

Idaho

The HSSCO continued to support systems issues of quality child care in Idaho. IdahoAEYC is the contractor for the quality child care initiative and Idaho's State Training and Registry System (IdahoSTARS) program and is a key partner in the Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs). The Idaho Child Care Administrator continues to be a strong supporter of the ELG work by authorizing National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) consultants and resources to support the content development.

The Early Years '08 Conference offered a number of sessions pertinent to child care providers and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) staff. All conference sessions offered IdahoSTARS credits for participation.

Illinois

Goal

To facilitate improvement and well-planned expansion of a quality system for Illinois early care and education services to low-income families with young children.

Goal

To enhance and expand Illinois EHS/early care and education partnerships and promote model strategies.

Outcomes

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ wrote the collaboration sections of the State Child Care Bureau Annual Report and the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) State Plan;
- ◆ participated in the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care Advisory Council meetings, strategic planning process, and staffed the Collaboration and Integration Committee;
- ◆ advocated for Head Start level inclusion in the State Quality Rating System, specifically on how to equate the Head Start triennial reviews with accreditation processes and how to document the Federal reviews;
- ◆ managed the DHS Child Care Collaboration Program, approving 10 new providers with roughly 500 collaboration slots, and began development of new policies, procedures, and administrative rules; and
- ◆ researched the Illinois child care licensing background check rules and compared them to Federal policy/law interpretations.

Indiana

There is no Child Care information available.

Iowa

Following the final authorization of new regulations that allow Head Start programs to use family child care as a viable Head Start program option, the HSSCO Director met with the State Child Care Administrator to discuss how Iowa might encourage partnerships between Head Start and child care providers. A family child care provider and a Head Start grantee were identified for a pilot project, but the effort awaits funding.

As a member of the State Child Care Advisory Council (SCCAC), the HSSCO Director is working at the state level to promote and expand the use of child care assistance (CCA) by eligible Head Start families and to support child care quality improvement efforts, especially for providers serving Head Start families. The 2008 Legislature passed increased funding that boosts CCA reimbursement by 2 percent and avoided a waiting list. The 2008 Legislature also asked the SCCAC to explore issues related to mandatory registration for family child care. That report was submitted to the legislature in December 2008 and recommended:

- ◆ establishing an enhanced regulatory system for home-based child care to assure all children are in safe, high-quality and developmentally appropriate settings;
- ◆ improving the quality of the home-based child care workforce and home-based child care environments that reflect the diversity of Iowa's families;
- ◆ providing fair and just compensation, benefits, and incentives to home-based child care providers to ensure high-quality, home-based child care is available to children in low-income families; and
- ◆ coordinating public engagement efforts with Early Childhood Iowa (ECI).

The HSSCO has been encouraging Head Start programs to participate in the State Quality Rating System (QRS) and by the end of the 2008, almost one-quarter of Iowa's 235 Head Start classrooms were QRS-rated (55 total classrooms). The HSSCO worked with Head Start directors in the State to encourage changes in the QRS to make it easier and more fair for Head Start programs to participate.

The state-funded EHS was showcased at a one-day summit on Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care in November 2008, as an example of collaboration with more informal types of child care. The HSSCO coordinates the funding and operation of EHS programs.

Kansas

The HSSCO participated in policy discussions on child care and gave input on Kansas child care regulations that will be revised in the next year.

The HSSCO Director is working on state pre-kindergarten issues with local and state partners. The HSSCO Director serves on the advisory council to address issues. One challenge has been programs' views (i.e. pre-kindergarten, Head Start, 4-year-olds at-risk) regarding collaboration on filling their enrollment slots. Programs continue to be concerned that they will not be able to fill their funded enrollment slots.

The HSSCO is housed within the SRS Economic and Employment Support Division with the office that oversees Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), the SRS Child Care Subsidy Manager and the State Child Care Administrator. The HSSCO Director attends monthly policy meetings scheduled with program staff and managers relating to planning and policies. This promotes collaborative efforts within the development of the agency's TANF State Plan and the Child Care State Plan.

The HSSCO collaborated with the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (KAC-CRRA) to promote availability and quality initiatives for child care in Kansas. The HSSCO provided funding for Keynote Speaker expenses at the 2008 Family Child Care Conference in Hutchinson April 25–26.

Kentucky

The HSSCO supported the Head Start/EHS Commonwealth of Kentucky partnership in which seven Head Start programs have used state child care subsidy dollars to serve Head Start/EHS children beyond the regular half-day of services.

The HSSCO supported Head Start's involvement in STARS for KIDS NOW, Kentucky's voluntary quality rating system for licensed child care centers. Seventeen of Kentucky's 32 grantees participate in STARS for KIDS NOW.

Louisiana

The HSSCO Director served on the Department of Social Services Quality Rating Steering Committee and Bright Start meetings, while also encouraging Head Start programs to participate in regional meetings and discussions on the QRS. The HSSCO Director also attended and/or participated in the National Conference on Quality Rating Improvement Systems in Minneapolis, on June 3–5, 2008. These public forums foster a better understanding and provide first-hand knowledge of the structure and implementation of the QRS in the State. The HSSCO encouraged Head Start programs and TTA specialists to attend in order to increase Head Start participation in the training.

The HSSCO Director met and assisted with the development of strategies aimed at the co-existence of child care, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten in classrooms around the State as it increases professional development opportunities for child care providers. Child care has demonstrated a need for professional development. Efforts are being

made to include child care providers in professional development opportunities as they become available through the State. Licensing requires that all trainers be Pathways-approved.

There is improved and expanded communication that includes child care, child care associations, children's advocates, and early childhood organizations throughout the State to maximize professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and service providers.

Maine

Head Start continued to have close collaboration with the State Child Care Administrator. The Early Care and Education Quality Rating System (Quality for ME) was implemented this year and includes a Head Start child care track. The gold or blue certificates awarded after a Head Start monitoring visit serve as one of the requirements for Step Four, the top level of the Quality Rating System (QRS).

The Child Care Resource Development Centers funded by the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) provide training on the Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines and the Infant Toddler Guidelines to Head Start programs, as well as other early care and education programs.

The infant and toddler specialist funded by CCDF provides training and technical assistance (TTA) to EHS and child care programs. She also meets with the EHS program leaders on a regular basis.

The Infant and Toddler Initiative organized and funded through the Child Care Administrator's Office developed an Infant and Toddler Credential for professionals working with infants and toddlers. The first level is based on training paid for through CCDF; the second level is 15 credits with courses taken after an associate's degree is obtained. Scholarships are available to assist child care and Head Start professionals acquire the second level Infant and Toddler Credential.

Maryland

The HSSCO connects Head Start/EHS programs with child care licensing offices. Information was shared with grantees, and facilitation was provided to Baltimore City Head Start and the licensing office to address barriers and streamline licensing processes.

The HSSCO Director facilitated a process whereby parents of children in licensed Head Start and child care facilities can access emergency assistance to find new placements for their children if a center suddenly closes.

The HSSCO Director, an EHS coordinator, and a Head Start director serve on the Office of Child Care Advisory Council, where collaboration issues are explored and opportunities developed with many public and private interest stakeholders.

Information is disseminated on the MSDE funding opportunities that foster partnerships among Head Start/EHS, pre-kindergarten, and child care. The HSSCO Director manages a Head Start state supplemental grant for expanding hours and days of services, often in partnership with child care.

Massachusetts

Supporting Pre-kindergarten Collaborations and Quality Systems

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) worked on the design and development of the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) as the framework for its early care and education system. The Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) Director has been a member of the Internal EEC Standards Design Team. The group, building on the work of external stakeholders and the EEC Parent Advisory Team, has developed a set of draft standards for three program types:

- ◆ center-based and school-operated programs
- ◆ family child care programs
- ◆ after-school and out-of-school time programs

The standards are undergoing a period of public comment. In addition, the Massachusetts Head Start Association (MHSA) has joined a group of external stakeholders to develop recommendations regarding Program and Practitioner Supports.

EEC has been engaged in a major review and revision of its group child care, family child care, and school-age licensing regulations. The HSSCO Director served on the Regulation Review Committee responsible for this project. It is intended that in April 2009, the Board of Early Education and Care would approve the draft regulations that will take effect in January 2010. They contain new provisions related to the quality of interactions among educators and children, as well as new regulations regarding curriculum and progress reports, professional development, and administration (to avoid suspension and termination of children), to highlight a few of the changes.

In addition, EEC designed and released a new contract bid for its Income Eligible (IE) Contract Program that provides financial assistance to nearly 12,000 children from birth to age 13 (age 16 for children with special needs). Contracted programs constitute approximately 40 percent of EEC's Income Eligible caseload. The HSSCO Director served on the internal workgroup that developed the contract bid and evaluation criteria. The re-procurement process provided EEC with an opportunity to align and integrate the development of its strategic policy innovations [e.g., the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)] with a range of program characteristics including accreditation, staff qualifications, screening and assessment practices, curriculum practices, and comprehensive services. These characteristics are designed to strengthen provider quality. EEC also used the re-procurement to create a limited demonstration project to test the feasibility of contracting directly with schools and family child care homes in communities with access challenges. New contracts are expected to go into effect in Fall 2009.

Michigan

The HSSCO Director continues to be directly involved in the work of Dr. Susan B. Neuman from the University of Michigan. Dr. Neuman has been awarded numerous grants where the HSSCO Director has actively worked with her to use Head Start sites in her research.

The HSSCO Director formed a collaborative effort with the DCH to address professional development concerns

of Head Start mental health consultants and other mental health consultants in Michigan. These concerns were related to the accessibility of services, collaboration with Head Start mental health staff and other state mental health consultants, professional development, and knowledge of the Head Start social and emotional protocol. A listserv was developed to connect all consultants. Training and networking sessions are held jointly with Head Start mental health consultants and DCH's Child Care Expulsion Prevention Program consultants who have assisted Head Start programs with specific grantee needs and statewide professional development.

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start

There is no Child Care information available.

Minnesota

To enhance and expand coordination and collaboration between Head Start, Child Care, Child Protective Services and other early care and education programs to increase accessibility, relevance and quality and promote model strategies.

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ worked with a group of colleagues in the DHS to eliminate barriers that keep Head Start and child care partnerships from using Child Care Assistance funds to support their work. The work resulted in a clarified system for authorizing Child Care Assistance for Head Start families who qualify. Head Start programs that participate in collaboration with child care can submit their agreement and/or complete a checklist with a cost allocation plan/budget for approval for their families to receive the full number of hours of child care assistance for which they are eligible. Those partnerships or full-day designs are approved by the State and are posted on the DHS Web site for counties to reference when they are authorizing care. The group provided four training sessions via WebEx or ITV to roll out the new procedures for Head Start programs and county workers in December 2008; and
- ◆ facilitated the participation of Head Start programs in the pre-kindergarten exploratory projects in three target areas of the State. Head Start is automatically eligible to serve children receiving the \$4,000 allowances. Consulted with one of the programs in the development of their program.

Mississippi

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ served on the State writing team for the Mississippi Child Care Plan;
- ◆ provided information to Head Start grantees, child care providers, and public school pre-kindergarten programs regarding voluntary participation in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) and actively supported the request for the \$2 million state appropriation to implement the system statewide;

- ◆ supported the State's request of \$1 million for the implementation of the Mississippi Child Care Resource and Referral System (MCCR&RS);
- ◆ ensured Head Start representation in state-level child care activities regarding child care regulation, quality, and funding; and
- ◆ facilitated the alignment of the Head Start Emergency Plan and the Child Care Emergency Plan with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Emergency Plan to better ensure safety of children attending child care centers. The Mississippi Interagency Early Childhood Emergency Preparedness Plan was developed to reduce risk factors in areas of high risk for severe weather.

Child Care Collaboration Partners include:

- ◆ MDE
- ◆ MDHS
- ◆ MDMH
- ◆ Office for Children and Youth
- ◆ Head Start grantees
- ◆ MHSA
- ◆ Mississippi Rural Early Childhood Institute
- ◆ Mississippi Early Childhood Institute
- ◆ CDF
- ◆ Family Support Services of Jackson
- ◆ Office of the Governor
- ◆ Kellogg Foundation's Mississippi Early Childhood Initiative
- ◆ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- ◆ MEMA

Missouri

There is no Child Care information available.

Montana

Objective: Access to Child Care Services.

Assist in developing policies and practices that promote the collaboration and coordination necessary to improve child care availability, quality, and affordability for all low-income children.

The HSSCO and Head Start/EHS are members of the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council (MECAC). The HSSCO attended and presented at each quarterly meeting, presented to the Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) Directors annual meeting on school readiness and child care, met with the CCR&R trainers about school readiness training, and presented about school readiness to child care providers through all 12 CCR&Rs. The HSSCO is involved in the dissemination of, as well as next steps and strategic planning, regarding the Economic Impact Study on Early Childhood in Montana. Head Start and the HSSCO Director have been involved in the statewide planning for Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) through the Early Childhood Services Bureau and the MECAC and have been instrumental in ensuring that Head Start is included in this quality incentive program.

Nebraska

The HSSCO provided information to support the DHHS Child Care Infant/Toddler Early Head Start (EHS) initiative. The HSSCO also provided input to the state plan for Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) and partnered extensively in social-emotional-behavioral health with CSEFEL and Early Childhood Pyramid activities. CCDF funds are used to support three pilot projects entitled “Nurturing Healthy Behaviors.” All three pilot projects, which include Head Start partnerships and/or staff, are demonstration sites for the CSEFEL statewide initiative.

Nevada

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ facilitated workgroup meetings to develop recommendations to the State Child Care Licensing Board for regulating facility director qualifications;
- ◆ developed an approach to strategic planning for more effective and efficient use of the child care development fund in Nevada. The administrator and two deputy administrators participated in strategic planning

for child care development, which is housed in the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services;

- ◆ convened a meeting of Head Start programs with the contracted child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency for northern and rural Nevada and the state child care administrator to develop criteria for contracted full-time child care funded slots at Head Start and Early Head Start (EHS) programs. Although the meeting did not include the CCR&R contractor from southern Nevada, the child care administrator said the agreed upon criteria would become a model for the State; and
- ◆ participated in planning meetings for the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) pilot project in southern Nevada.

New Hampshire

Goal: Improve quality among Head Start programs, as well as licensed and license-exempt child care providers.

Objective: Support Head Start and child care programs to offer resources and referrals to meet families' needs.

Leadership on related initiatives. The HSSCO Administrator served on several councils and teams related to program quality, including a Strengthening Families Initiative, Child Care Advisory Council committee, and domestic violence/substance abuse prevention initiative, as follows:

- ◆ A newly-formed Child Care Advisory Council subcommittee on health and safety to explore:
 - ◆ linking providers and families with high-quality resources and information related to health and safety issues;
 - ◆ accessing a Web-based option for training child care, Head Start, and other early care and education providers on medication administration, using New York's model; and
 - ◆ promoting a universal health form for child care, Head Start, and preschool programs, which would make it easier for physicians to complete and for families to transfer this information from one program to another during times of transition.
- ◆ *Safe Families/Safe Homes.* Child care providers are actively recruited to participate in this miniseries on domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, and substance abuse, which includes current resources and referral information to services and support for families; and
- ◆ *Watch Me Grow.* Parent education materials on child development and red flags, as well as resource information were distributed to Head Start and child care programs as part of the *Watch Me Grow* initiative on developmental screening, early identification, and referral.

Desired Outcome: Early care and education providers routinely offer resources and information to families on health and safety; screening, early identification, referral; and domestic violence/substance abuse.

Objective: Head Start Federal review will receive parity in the Quality Rating System.

The NH Child Care Quality Rating System for licensed child care programs includes “Licensed-Plus,” the designation for a program that has achieved quality above that required by child care licensing, but has not yet attained accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Programs that have achieved the Licensed-Plus designation receive a quality award of state funds in addition to scholarship payment rate. The Head Start Directors Association recommended to the Child Development Bureau that the Head Start Federal program review receive parity in the Quality Rating System. Following initial planning discussions last year, this issue will be targeted as part of a Quality Rating System redesign effort, which is currently underway.

New Jersey

The HSSCO Director and representatives from Head Start/EHS currently serve on the Policy Development Board. The purpose of the Board is to review State Child Care Administrator policies and to provide feedback regarding professional development for child care providers.

New Mexico

There is no Child Care information available.

New York

Quality Rating and Improvement System—Obtaining quality child care is difficult for families. It is especially difficult for low-income working parents who may work irregular hours and cannot afford the cost of care, let alone high-quality child care. During the last several years, the HSSCO has taken several steps to make quality child care more readily available. During the last year, this has included the HSSCO Director serving on a small group charged with the design of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). During the year, the responsibility for developing a QRIS was transferred from the NYS Child Care Coordinating Council to the State Child Care administrator under the oversight of the Children’s Cabinet and its Advisory Board.

The QRIS design group was developed to:

- ◆ complete the rating scale and process for rating programs;
- ◆ designing and implementing a pilot test of the rating scale and process; and
- ◆ designing the various components needed to support a QRIS including:
 - ◆ professional development
 - ◆ program incentives
 - ◆ technical assistance

◆ parent engagement

The QRIS design team also worked with a public relations consultant (funded by private foundations) to develop a name and logo for the initiative. It was agreed to name the initiative QUALITYstarsNY. Graphics that represent the various aspects of a coordinated system are being created for use with stakeholder groups. A section on the HSSCO's Web site, <http://www.earlychildhood.org>, has been developed to provide information on QUALITYstarsNY. The site includes general information on the initiative; answers to frequently asked questions; the program standards for both center-based programs and family child care providers; as well as a survey to provide feedback on both sets of standards.

North Carolina

Several collaborative meetings were held across the State to promote Head Start/pre-kindergarten partnerships in targeted counties where collaboration had stalled. The meetings resulted in a newly developed Head Start/pre-kindergarten partnership in a county with deeply strained relations and the strengthening of existing partnerships in other counties. The HSSCO has worked to grow the participation of Head Start with state pre-kindergarten. Head Start programs account for nearly 20 percent of state pre-kindergarten “slots” — up from about 14 percent a year ago.

The HSSCO Director participated in planning meetings that included the State Child Care Administrator and the North Carolina Smart Start Office to develop a state-funded EHS initiative.

North Dakota

The HSSCO completed a crosswalk grid between the North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines ages 3–5 and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. Many local Head Start programs have integrated the Early Learning Guidelines and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework with their curriculum.

Outcomes

The HSSCO continued to provide leadership and support the sixth draft of the Early Learning Guidelines (ages 3–6). The Guidelines were disseminated and posted on the DHS Web site in 2008. The HSSCO Administrator and the Early Childhood Services Administrator (the State Child Care Administrator) coordinated editing, printing, dissemination, and statewide training for the early childhood community in early 2008.

Action Step

Encourage and promote Head Start involvement in forming child care partnerships to provide full-year, full-day, quality child care services for Head Start and EHS families.

Outcome

The HSSCO Administrator and the Early Childhood Services Administrator are co-located in DHS, Children and Family Services Division and work closely on many of Federal and State early care and education initiatives.

Ohio

The HSSCO Director collaborated with the State Child Care Administrator and the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) to co-chair the Ohio Professional Development Network (OPDN). The network includes volunteer members from Head Start, child care, higher education, pre-kindergarten, professional development organizations and associations, technical assistance (TA) providers, early childhood membership associations, special education, and school-age child care. Its purpose is to support the creation of a comprehensive professional development system and to advance the status of early childhood and afterschool professionals. The network meets bimonthly to discuss the progress of the many early care and education initiatives occurring in the State. Some initiatives include:

- ◆ T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education for College and Higher Education) Early Childhood Ohio
- ◆ Head Start/Early Head Start (EHS)
- ◆ Step Up to Quality (Quality Rating System)
- ◆ First Steps (TA for infant and toddler programs)
- ◆ Professional Development Registry

Oklahoma

Goal: Build best possible linkages between local, community-based Head Start programs, and state early childhood initiatives and policies.

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ communicated with multiple groups concerning requirements for Head Start employee background checks. The HSSCO provided information to the Oklahoma Head Start Association (OHSA), the State Department of Education, and a new child care licensing staff member. The HSSCO Director also communicated with the Regional Office and the Office of Head Start (OHS) about the process in Oklahoma for obtaining background checks;
- ◆ worked with the State Superintendent for Public Instruction to develop a memo that was sent to public school superintendents regarding the Head Start requirement to develop local MOUs with school districts in their service area; and
- ◆ worked with the State Child Care Administrator and Smart Start Oklahoma Executive Director to coordinate activities included in the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Strategic Plan.

Oregon

Head Start/Child Care Collaboration

Objective: To support and maintain collaboration between child care and Head Start for promotion of full-day/year service delivery models, shared training, problem-solving, and policy development.

Priority Areas: Child Care, Welfare Reform, Education, Disabilities, Homeless, Family Literacy, and Health Care.

Activities: The HSSCO Director led and facilitated ongoing work of the Head Start/child care workgroup. The purpose of the workgroup is to support local efforts to integrate and implement best practices for comprehensive child development services that address the needs of working parents. The workgroup provided ongoing support and problem solving for local programs regarding child care contract issues, collaborative program models, funding, and policy issues. The effort supported the requirements in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 regarding promotion of child care partnerships. The workgroup identified the need to promote continuity of quality for all children in all settings throughout the system as the top priority for its work.

As its first step, the workgroup is creating a crosswalk among the different early childhood regulations and standards for children, including child care, Head Start, family child care, and private preschool. From this baseline, the workgroup will identify gaps and provide service and policy recommendations. A secondary priority is to address child care issues related to services for children in foster care. Those issues include lack of funding for child care, coordination of placements in Head Start, and provision of services to foster parents. This is a work in progress.

Accomplishments: The workgroup has accomplished:

- ◆ sponsorship, planning, and implementation of three child care/Head Start Summits, “Together We’re Better,” to address emerging collaboration issues;
- ◆ policy development regarding categorical eligibility for Head Start families participating in programs under the authority of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);
- ◆ development and dissemination of a document that addresses Head Start and Child Care policy and other contract issues titled, *Frequently Asked Contract Questions*; and
- ◆ development of written descriptions of local child care/Head Start partnership approaches/models titled, *Supporting Low Wage Workers and Their Children*.

The DHS contracts support comprehensive full-day/year Head Start/child care services. The Head Start/child care partnership model descriptions have been disseminated to local Head Start and child care programs. Trainings have been provided at the annual Oregon Head Start coordinators meeting and other trainings to encourage more partnership models across the State.

Pennsylvania

In Fall 2008, the HSSCO participated on a state team to plan and implement a poverty simulation for regional staff. This activity was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) for state Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) staff, and Pennsylvania Keys to Quality staff.

Both the HSSCO Director and project manager participated on the Pennsylvania Braiding and Blending Task Force. This OCDEL-sponsored task force was developed due to the recognition that small-to-medium programs were receiving multiple funding opportunities and struggling to be accountable. The task force included representatives from child care, Early Intervention, Head Start/EHS, school districts, and the OCDEL. As a result, resources were developed and posted on the Pennsylvania Keys Web site. Key changes included Head Start members explaining the differences between state and Federal reporting, and the OCDEL changing its categories to be in better alignment with the Federal categories. (This partially addresses a 2008 goal.)

Rhode Island

The HSSCO is part of the Office of Child Care and is a full partner in the development of policies, procedures, and public exchanges and feedback about the child care assistance program. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus package has obtained broad input from the community, particularly around the quality set-aside provisions. Recommendations have been submitted to the Governor's Office. As a member of the Legislative Commission on Child Care, the HSSCO supported the inclusion of Head Start members and facilitated conversations between the Commission and the Office of Child Care.

South Carolina

The State Child Care administrator supervises the HSSCO. The location of the HSSCO allows for inclusion in child care-focused meetings and planning.

A decade-long partnership has been maintained with the quality section of the ABC Child Care Program. The partnership includes Head Start's inclusion in graduate cohorts. A specific scholarship opportunity is the WestEd Infant Toddler Program (PITC). Records show that at least 15 Head Start personnel have completed the four modules of the specialized infant toddler program. Some have gone on to work with technical assistance (TA) contractors.

In addition, Head Start has accessed scholarships focusing on multicultural issues and inclusive practices for young children with disabilities. One goal of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) scholarship opportunity is to create a strong early childhood trained infrastructure, raising the educational level of the child care workforce in the State. Scholarship recipients are expected to complete the process of becoming a certified trainer through the South Carolina Child Care Career Development training registry, as well as to develop an action plan allowing them to share gained knowledge with workplace peers.

The HSSCO maintained a long-standing full-year/extended-day set-aside through the ABC voucher program.

Head Start supplemental funding allowed for capacity building efforts focusing on multiple funding streams. Fifteen grantees presently participate in the extended-day effort. Records show that approximately \$600,000 of the appropriated \$1 million set-aside was expended in 2008. This translates to an average of 240 children served per month. An updated Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Head Start programs and the SCDSS is pending.

The HSSCO joined the ABC/Child Care Licensing team. Designed to synchronize ABC efforts and licensing, the team provided updates and alerts concerning center license compliance obstacles at the local level.

A new and beneficial child care partnership for 2008–09 has been the South Carolina Child Care Services Emergency Plan Guide. Head Start mandates were shared with child care and are included in a published disaster response document. South Carolina licensed facilities are now required to have an emergency plan on file and on-site that addresses emergency medical situations and evacuations. A state child care specialist conducted a disaster information session at the Fall 2008 Head Start training. The HSSCO is working with local agents of a national insurer to provide a disaster aftermath brochure for all South Carolina Head Start families. Efforts include distribution to as many ABC child care centers as possible.

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are a part of a contract from the State Child Care Office to some local United Way agencies. Head Start is now included in quarterly partners meetings in regions of the State designed to maximize resources and share updates across the child care providers spectrum.

South Carolina Head Start continued efforts to maintain and expand the number of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited centers. Of the 123 accredited centers in the State, 70 are Head Start centers. The HSSCO and the SCHSA partner to access a TTA pool housed with the South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children. In addition, a partnership is maintained to assist programs achieving the designation.

South Dakota

Strategy

Promote Head Start involvement in forming child care partnerships to provide full-year, full-day quality child care services for Head Start families.

Outcomes

A meeting was held in September with program directors and staff from the Office of Child Care Services to discuss various issues identified during a planning meeting. Several issues were discussed, including child care partnerships, child care assistance, and professional development.

Strategy

Promote Head Start involvement in child care dialogue and planning, in collaboration with the DSS, the Office of Child Care Services, and the SDHSA.

Outcomes

The HSSCO Director attended the National Child Care State Administrators meeting in Washington, D.C., in July. The State Child Care administrator attended the partners meeting in Denver, Colorado. The two offices,

along with the SDHSA, have discussed professional development opportunities for Head Start programs and child care providers.

Tennessee

The Tennessee DHS for the past 7 years has administered the Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) for all licensed child care centers in the State. Scoring is on a STAR rating system with a 3-STAR rating being the highest. Head Start classrooms are licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and, with more than 90 percent of the Head Start classrooms scoring at the 3-STAR level.

The DHS is embarking on a new credential for directors of child care programs; Head Start directors will be eligible for this credential. A presentation was made to the Head Start directors at one of their quarterly meetings to keep them informed about the credential.

The HSSCO Director served on the advisory board for the DHS Child Care Referral and Resource Centers that provide TTA to child care centers and Head Start programs across the State.

Texas

Objective: Strengthen communication so as to enhance collaboration.

In compliance with House Bill 2048, and in collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), United Way of Texas, the HSSCO, and other partners, the Texas Information and Referral Network, 2-1-1, was developed and is now available by phone and Internet. The Web site, <http://www.211texas.org> helps parents locate Head Start, child care, and public school programs. In December 2007, the site received 1,267 visits in that area alone. To date, 575,509 telephone calls have been received, with callers receiving child care information in more than 90 languages. The information found online is also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by dialing 2-1-1 from anywhere in Texas.

Using this single point of access, parents can locate private or public-assisted care and educational services for children. A new search feature draws on information from the HSSCO, the Texas Educational Agency, the Texas Workforce Commission, and Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Information related to these services is updated on a regular basis.

Parents may locate and learn about licensed and registered child care, pre-kindergarten, and afterschool programs, as well as educational services for children with special needs. Inquiries are sorted by Zip code, city, or county. Parents who need help paying for child care may use the Web site to request information about financial assistance.

Like its telephone counterpart, <http://www.211texas.org> also offers information for those seeking help with broader needs such as food, shelter, medical care, and thousands of other benefits and services that are provided locally. The Web site and 2-1-1 Texas are services offered through collaboration and coordination among the HHSC, local government, and community groups. Both services pull information from a network of more than 20,000 organizations statewide.

Utah

The HSSCO Director participated in Utah Policy Matters Early Care and Education Subcommittee meetings to explore solutions to improving teacher compensation. This group is no longer meeting.

Vermont

The HSSCO:

- ◆ revised standards for Vermont's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) program, STARS. This is the first revision since the program started in 2003. Pre-kindergarten legislation, enacted in 2007, requires programs to meet quality standards, including that they have at least 3 STARS (out of 5) with a plan to reach 4 STARS within a year. The legislation also required the program to undergo a rule-making process that will be completed in May 2009;
- ◆ reached agreement that Head Start/EHS programs would qualify for 5 STARS, and would not be required to complete the full STARS application if they provide evidence of a positive outcome from their Federal review. This affords Head Start grantees equal footing with nationally accredited early childhood programs in the quality rating system;
- ◆ collaborated with child care, EHS, other HSSCOs, and health professionals on a Region I review team that developed infant-toddler training modules for consultants working in child care and EHS programs;
- ◆ coordinated quality enhancement support for state-funded infant toddler child care programs through monthly conference calls, on-site visits, and one statewide meeting. Topics included financing infant toddler care, providing continuity of care through primary caregiving and looping, and the influence of infant toddler care to strengthen families;
- ◆ attended Region I roundtable on developing Quality Rating Systems;
- ◆ organized meetings with stakeholders to develop a framework for, and wrote the introduction section of, *First Steps: Guiding the Development and Learning of Vermont's Infants and Toddlers* (Vermont's infant toddler early learning guidelines—a work in progress); and
- ◆ communicated with the VHSA about changes to two state child care funding mechanisms:
 - ◆ Reserved Spaces Agreements (for a block of subsidy-eligible slots in Head Start and child care programs that meet quality criteria); and
 - ◆ Family Support Child Care (a subsidy category for children at risk of abuse and neglect). Head Start directors see these mechanisms as critical elements in providing full-day, full-year services.

Virginia

Goal

Children and families will have access to seamless transitions between coordinated learning environments such as home and early care and education to elementary school.

Virginia's Plan for Smart Beginnings. This public/private strategic plan for early childhood initiatives in Virginia is focused on building and sustaining a system to support parents and families as they prepare their children to arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. Co-led by the Governor's Working Group on Early Childhood Initiatives and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, the plan focuses on five over-arching goals in these areas:

- ◆ governance and finance
- ◆ family support and education
- ◆ early care and education
- ◆ health
- ◆ public engagement

The HSSCO and the Head Start community are involved in implementing the plan and play a significant role in its ongoing development and success.

Child Care Professional Development Team. The quality unit and the HSSCO are involved in a professional development initiative to increase the quality of services offered to early childhood professionals and to develop an early childhood professional registry.

Head Start Wrap Around. The HSSCO worked with the child care subsidy unit to make funds available for wrap-around subsidy to Head Start children and their siblings. The HSSCO and the subsidy staff offered technical assistance to communities with questions and program implementation issues regarding subsidy rates.

Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) Training Classes. The OECD offers comprehensive training classes throughout the Commonwealth to all child care providers. The HSSCO distributed the available training catalogue to all Head Start grantees.

Solving the Preschool Puzzle. In April 2008, the Secretary of Education sponsored eight regional discussion groups for early childhood professionals to work together to provide high-quality early learning for young professionals. A resource document was developed to highlight successful community partnerships. The HSSCO participated in writing pieces of the document and identifying Head Start communities with collaboration successes. The forums were very successful and provided valuable information to communities, initiated collaboration discussions, and created opportunities for the preschool programs to network.

Washington

There is no Child Care information available.

West Virginia

There is no Child Care information available.

Wisconsin

The HSSCO Director:

- ◆ supported a Tribal child care liaison position contracted through the Supporting Families Together Association to strengthen partnerships among American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start grantees and Tribal child care;
- ◆ worked closely with the director of the Bureau of Early Childhood Education and the administrator of the Division of Early Care and Education; and
- ◆ included child care subsidy and licensing representatives on the Collaboration Advisory Committee.

Wyoming

Goal: Support efforts to increase the availability, accessibility, and quality of full-day, full-year early care and educational services for children in Head Start/EHS in collaboration with other early care and education programs.

Objective: Support efforts to improve the quality of early care and education programs through licensing, technical assistance (TA), or other program quality initiatives.

Task: Facilitate Head Start participation in professional development articulation meetings.

The HSSCO Director participated in the professional development community college/University of Wyoming articulation meeting designed to:

- ◆ gain a clear understanding of what the options are for awarding the professional development scholarship monies; and

- ◆ ensure that there are paths for professional development in place that will flow and transfer to meet the needs and interests of early childhood professionals.

The purpose of these meetings was to learn about the various community college/university professional development programs available now and to begin a discussion of how the HSSCO and institutions of higher education can work together to make professional development opportunities more coordinated and effective. Participants included representatives from the University of Wyoming, Wyoming community colleges, the Wyoming Department of Education, Head Start, early childhood education providers, Wyoming Children's Action Alliance, Child Nutritional Services, and Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

Objective: Support efforts to inform state and Federal policies/procedures and participate in system-building efforts that increase availability, accessibility, affordability, and quality full-day, full-year child care and preschool services.

Task: Develop a statewide Head Start branding campaign.

The HSSCO organized the 2007 Wyoming Head Start Visioning Conference. The theme of this conference was, "What Might We Become?" The overall purpose of the conference was to develop a shared vision of Head Start in Wyoming, with a plan for achieving the vision that identifies existing and potential resources and enhances the capacity to work together. The outcome of this conference was a set of strategic visions and goals for the HSSCO and the Wyoming Head Start Association (WHSA), along with a concrete plan for implementation. The HSSCO is currently in the planning stages for the follow-up April Visioning Conference.

The HSSCO developed and printed the Wyoming Program Information Report (PIR) data book and distributed it to Head Start programs, state agencies, the Wyoming Congressional delegation, and the early childhood education community.